

Good Health is in Your Hands

Hand washing is an effective and easy way to prevent the spread of germs and infections. However, not all hand washing techniques are created equal. Proper hand washing includes following these steps:

- Wet your hands with running water and apply liquid soap or a clean bar soap. Lather well.
- Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 15-20 seconds.
- Scrub all surfaces including the back of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your nails.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
- Use the towel to turn off the faucet.

Hands washing is recommended for, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

- Before preparing food
- Before and after using the toilet
- Before and after interacting with people; especially people who are sick
- After cleaning toilets and bathrooms
- After handling potentially contaminated or soiled clothes and bed linens
- After cleaning up vomit or other waste
- After cleaning and sanitizing surfaces
- After eating, drinking and smoking
- After handling animals
- After handling chemicals or pesticides
- After removing gloves

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a great alternative to hand washing when soap and water are not available. The CDC recommends using hand sanitizers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol. To use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer you should apply about ½ teaspoon of the liquid to the palm of your hand and rub your hands together, covering all surfaces, until your hands are dry. Failing to cover all surfaces greatly reduces the efficacy of hand sanitizers.

Hand sanitizers are not recommended when your hands are visibly dirty or when you have been using pesticides. Alcohol based cleaners and hand wipes are intended for killing germs and are NOT effective for removing chemicals. Soap and water should be used after handling fertilizers, pesticides or any other chemicals.

For more information visit,

http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp/cruiselines/hand_hygiene_general.htm.